

“Serbian Democracy’s Deal for Kosovo and Metohija”

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“Past and Future Status of Kosovo”

Mr. Vuk Jeremic

Senior Advisor to the President of Serbia, Boris Tadic

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Mr. Chairman,
Honorable Members of the International Relations Committee,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I thank you for the opportunity to appear before this Committee. I am here today to present to you President Boris Tadic of Serbia’s new deal for Kosovo and Metohija.

The situation in Kosovo and Metohija represents a regional, a European, and a Euro-Atlantic challenge. At the same time, it is a challenge that concerns the relationship between Serbs and Albanians, especially between those who reside in Kosovo and Metohija. It is also a problem for the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro, given that Kosovo and Metohija is an integral part of it.

It is President Tadic’s duty to view this challenge in all its dimensions, and to do all in his power to advance a negotiated and just solution to this unique situation. Indeed, President Tadic is committed to moving forward in a way that does not result in permanent winners and permanent losers in one of the most volatile regions of all of Europe. If recent Balkan history has taught us anything, it is that maximalist claims, at the end of the day, harm all sides, especially those who advance them.

Serbia cannot do this alone. Only by working together—Serbs and Albanians, Americans and Europeans—can we make the Western Balkans a symbol of how a difficult past can become a hopeful future.

It is in this spirit that President Tadic has repeatedly invited the political leader of the Kosovo Albanians, Ibrahim Rugova, to meet with him bilaterally in Belgrade or Pristina, so as to begin direct political dialogue at the highest level. Sadly, the other day, President Tadic received a letter from the current SRS, Soren Jessen-Petersen, informing him that he had been unable to persuade Mr. Rugova to accept such an offer.

President Tadic deeply regrets this turn of events. As the prophet Amos asks, “can two walk together without having met?” And without such dialogue, the likelihood of two vital long-term

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strategic goals being met would diminish. First, coming to an agreed upon solution that would be acceptable to both sides; and second, opening a way toward an accelerated EU accession process.

But this afternoon, I wish to discuss President Tadic’s creative and just vision for the future of Kosovo and Metohija. A vision that will consolidate the region’s democratic gains for good. A vision that takes seriously the legitimate interests of both Belgrade and Pristina. A vision that leads to regional stability and prosperity. A vision that allows the entire region to gallop toward Europe. A vision that leads to peace, security and multiethnic tolerance and cohabitation.

Mr. Chairman,

Before addressing the heart of the issue, I would like to say a few words about the political situation in Belgrade. It relates directly to the matter at hand.

Since the citizens of Serbia peacefully overthrew Slobodan Milosevic on October 5th, 2000, we have demonstrated time and again our firm and unconditional commitment to democracy and the free market. We have gone to the polls five times, and five times our citizens have reaffirmed their dedication to repudiate the policies of Milosevic.

In October 2000, we elected Vojislav Kostunica to the presidency of Yugoslavia. In December 2000, we elected Zoran Djindjic Prime Minister of Serbia. Following his assassination in March 2003 and the eight months of a democratic caretaker government, a clear majority of the citizens of Serbia once again voted for democratic parties, and the government of Prime Minister Kostunica was formed. In June 2004, Boris Tadic, our country’s former Minister of Defense and Zoran Djindjic’s successor as president of the Democratic Party, soundly defeated his Radical Party opponent and became Serbia’s first-ever non-communist President. Finally, in September 2004, candidates representing pro-Western, democratic parties such as Boris Tadic’s DS and Vojislav Kostunica’s DSS were elected as mayors and attained solid majorities in most of Serbia’s cities, small towns, and villages.

Thus, unlike most other transition democracies since the fall of communism, the citizens of Serbia have never turned their backs on the forces of freedom and democracy. In Serbia, freedom, democracy and stability go hand in hand.

And now that we have received a positive feasibility study by the European Commission and the EU Council of Ministers, the process by which we will surely enter the European Union has begun.

Mr. Chairman,

The President of Serbia is dedicated to the proposition that democracy cannot flourish without a full and open account of the past. All must face this recent past honestly, and call things by their proper terms: men who committed atrocities in the name of any nation ought to be termed war criminals.

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Reconciliation is in the national interest of all. For that to take place, all those who committed crimes on all sides must be held accountable.

That is why President Tadic has maintained such a strong and principled stance with regard to the necessity for full and immediate cooperation with the Hague Tribunal. For President Tadic, the Hague challenge is one that Serbia must confront, not only because it is our international obligation, but because it is necessary for Serbian society to confront its difficult past.

Individual Serbs committed atrocities against Croats, Bosniaks and Albanians. They must be held accountable. Many have been tried in Serbia—some in military courts—and are serving jail-time for their deeds. Individual Croats and Bosniaks did as well, and so did Albanians from Kosovo and Metohija. In this context, President Tadic welcomed the voluntary surrender of the former KLA leader, Ramoush Haradinaj, who is accused of committing war crimes and other atrocities against Serbs and Roma in Kosovo and Metohija.

In Kosovo and Metohija, the situation remains blurry because while the Hague Tribunal’s authority to prosecute ends with the secession of hostilities in June 1999, crimes continued to be committed. And the judicial system set up by UNMIK has largely failed to live up to the challenge of investigating, prosecuting and convicting those who committed crimes after the arrival of the international community. The rule of law has not rooted itself into the soil of Kosovo and Metohija.

In Serbia, on the other hand, building upon the remarkable success of the Djindjic and Kostunica governments in extradicting ICTY indicted war criminals, and the comprehensive advancements we have made in defense sector reforms, Serbia, through the State Union, is one man—one indictee, Ratko Mladic—away from being offered membership in Partnership for Peace, and eventually NATO. Serbia is dedicated to capturing Mladic. As President Tadic has stated clearly, if Mladic is in Serbia, we will find him, and we will extradite him to the Hague.

First as Defense Minister and now as President, Boris Tadic is firmly committed to full and swift European and Euro-Atlantic integration, and is doing all in his power to advance these vital national interests. And the people of Serbia firmly support his strategic vision, for he ran on a strongly pro-Western platform during the presidential campaign. Serbia sees itself as a strategic regional partner of the United States.

Mr. Chairman,

The UN Charter makes a clear distinction between self-determination and independence.

Today, some regional leaders argue that the future lies in European and Euro-Atlantic integration, but at the same time advocate the disintegration of the countries of which they are citizens.

This way of thinking is not European. Worse, it contradicts our common goal of building a safe and prosperous future for the Western Balkans.

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The paradoxical approach to the future in which the only way forward lies in first achieving a maximalistic outcome, is outdated. In the twenty-first century, no regional leader can allow himself to be guided by nineteenth-century ideologies.

The way out of this paradox is the clear European perspective that is on offer to the entire region. This perspective should encourage all of us to work more diligently to establish mutually-beneficial ways to cooperate and integrate.

This is why Serbia’s position on the future status of Kosovo and Metohija is a constructive one. And why an agreement on its future must take into consideration the legitimate interests of both sides.

Mr. Chairman,

President Tadic called on the Serbs from Kosovo and Metohija to vote in the provincial Assembly elections in October 2004. The President did this despite knowing that there was internal political opposition to this constructive approach. He did so because of his conviction that it is important for the Serb community to be represented in the PISG. And I am pleased to add that in the months following the provincial Assembly election, many throughout Serbia who opposed President Tadic’s decision have since embraced his position, as well as his longstanding policy of constructive engagement.

At the same time, President Tadic clearly stipulated what it would take for those representatives to enter into the Assembly. The reason for this stipulation was simple: despite the importance of representation, a people cannot participate in an institution that has done little to ensure that their fundamental human and civil rights, even their security, are adequately protected. On this point, there remains complete unanimity in Serbia.

President Tadic remains firmly committed to the process of engagement, and is actively working on establishing the momentum necessary for the elected Kosovo and Metohija Serb representatives to take their rightful place in the Assembly.

As President Tadic saw for himself when he visited Kosovo and Metohija in mid-February 2005, the vast majority of the province’s Serbs live in enclaves or ghettos. The conditions in which they live are reminiscent of a regime whose defeat 60 years ago all of us celebrated recently as a victory of civilization over barbarism.

Today, the Serbs of Kosovo and Metohija live in conditions that bring shame to all who celebrate the victory against the evil that had occupied Europe at that time.

Before his historic visit to the province, President Tadic chose an itinerary that allowed him to see personally the full spectrum of conditions in Kosovo and Metohija, and that enabled him to speak to as many people throughout the various regions of this province.

Thus he spent significant time talking to the often forgotten residents of the town of Priluzje, administratively divided into two separate municipalities. Their disenfranchisement was clearly in evidence, and their plight was clearly desperate.

President Tadic also visited the village of Belo Polje, a once thriving community of around 1000 homes. Belo Polje was attacked twice, once in June 1999, and then again during the March 2004 pogrom. The second time, the Kosovo and Metohija extremists took care to burn down the UNMIK-financed rebuilt houses, as well as a 14th-century Serbian Orthodox church. Today, fewer than 30 Serbs live in a collective center, while the rest of Belo Polje—hundreds and hundreds of homes—lies in ruins. Ironically, its geographic position enables it to overlook the thriving city of Pec, entirely ethnically cleansed of Serbs. Furthermore, President Tadic saw for himself how access to the village is restricted, as heavily-armed NATO troops, aided by barbed wire and observation posts, stand guard—the only guarantee against a renewed effort to permanently expel the few Serbs that valiantly remain.

President Tadic also visited the village of Cernica, where more than half the Serb population was ethnically cleansed after the arrival of international forces. Those who remain live on one side of a long, narrow street, surrounded by a hostile Albanian population.

They live in the most horrendous conditions in Europe. Their only zone of freedom is a schoolyard behind a makeshift two-room school house. It is surrounded by barbed wire. To get to the graveyard and the church at the top of a hill—about 200 yards away—the locals must risk their lives. They regularly have insults shouted at them, and almost every resident of Cernica has had rocks or bricks thrown at him or her since the arrival of UNMIK. Several have been killed by the bullets of murderers who freely walk the streets of Kosovo and Metohija, including a 3 year-old boy—the son of the school principal.

These killers have freedom of movement, while their victims live behind barbed wire. And all that under the watchful eye of UNMIK and the PISG.

During President Tadic’s visit, the international police in charge of his security at first refused to allow him to walk from the schoolyard to the graveyard, arguing that it was too dangerous. He replied that if children and their parents took the risk, he would do the same. And he did, acting against the advice of the thousand or so men and women—including about a dozen Americans—designated as his security force during his historic visit.

Mr. Chairman,

Serbia seeks the establishment of European values and practices in Kosovo and Metohija—without these and other Standards, the rule of law cannot be entrenched. A vital issue in the political Standards evaluation process is decentralization. For the Kosovo and Metohija Serbs, a comprehensive decentralization plan is not simply an issue of better governance. It is an issue fundamentally related to security and IDP returns—both key Standards as well.

When President Tadic called on the Serbs of Kosovo and Metohija to exercise their right to vote in the provincial Assembly elections, he stipulated that their elected representatives would not take their seats in the Assembly until UNMIK and the PISG presented a comprehensive decentralization plan.

This plan, he stated in an Address to the Nation, would have to adequately address five fundamental aspects of decentralization:

1. local judiciary
2. local police
3. local health care
4. local education
5. adjusted municipal borders, in line with the European Charter of Local Self-Government

President Tadic argued for engagement because it was the right thing to do, and he remains firmly committed to engaging the process at all levels. This is why he has encouraged the various working groups to meet, and why already we are seeing positive results.

For example, the inaugural Working Group on Returns meeting that took place in Belgrade a few days ago has resulted in UNMIK and the PISG accepting in principle Belgrade’s strategy on establishing the conditions for returning the 228,741 IDPs to Kosovo and Metohija—a breakthrough that could have been achieved years ago had there been more willingness on the part of Pristina to listen to the needs of those expelled from their homes. But without a comprehensive decentralization plan, it seems unlikely that even the acceptance of Belgrade’s return strategy will produce a critical mass of actual, sustainable returns.

(And we still have to change the views of those in Pristina who argue that the IDPs will never return, and so discussing ways to improve the conditions necessary for them to choose whether to do so, is futile. But President Tadic believes in the multiethnic future of Kosovo and Metohija, and refuses to accept the legitimacy of that defeatist way of thinking.)

So far, President Tadic’s clear stipulations on the decentralization process have been ignored, to the detriment of all residents of Kosovo and Metohija. Instead, the UNMIK and PISG-driven decentralization process has begun work on five pilot projects that have a testing period of 18 months.

This way of implementing decentralization is difficult to accept for two main reasons. First, because even these five pilot projects do not address adequately President Tadic’s clear and non-controversial stipulations. Second, because the 18-month testing period means that decentralization is being transformed from a Standards issue to a Status issue. This is unacceptable to President Tadic, and it goes against UNMIK’s own Standards schema.

For President Tadic—and for the international community as well—comprehensive decentralization must be implemented as part of the Standards process. Foot-dragging has prevented that from taking place. The failure to implement across-the-board decentralization

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close to 6 years after the UN began to administer Kosovo and Metohija signals that we have a long way to go before we can say that this key Standard has been met.

It bears repeating, Mr. Chairman: the Serbs of Kosovo and Metohija live worse than any other community in Europe. Barely 10,000 of the 228,741 ethnically cleansed Serbs and other non-Albanian IDPs have returned to their homes. Many of those who have courageously remained are being pressured to sell their property, and some have been compelled to leave.

This is not freedom. This is not multiethnicity. This is not democracy. It is a kind of tyranny exercised by an arbitrary, anarchic and violent majority.

With the exception of those who reside in the northern tip of Kosovo and Metohija, practically all the Serbs who remain live in constant fear, without elementary security considerations having been met, and without freedom of movement.

Notwithstanding the exception of the northern part of Kosovka Mitrovica, Serbs are absent from the cities and towns of Kosovo and Metohija. The level of disillusionment among the people is high. Their unemployment level is at a staggering 95 percent. With few exceptions, they have lost hope.

President Tadic is concerned by the misleading picture many well-meaning visitors to Kosovo and Metohija get when their visit to the province centers on Pristina. Between meetings with UNMIK and PISG officials, they drive through a seemingly thriving provincial capital enjoying a construction and population boom. What they do not see is the origin of the capital used to rebuild the economy. And what they do not see are the close to 40,000 Pristina Serbs who have been cleansed from the city since June 1999. And this in a city with the highest *per capita* foreign civilian and military presence of anywhere in the Western Balkans, perhaps anywhere in Europe.

And one cannot blame the oppressed for the failures of those who should have done more, much more, to help them to be empowered.

Mr. Chairman,

Things can, and must, get better.

It is not too late.

President Tadic is committed to continue to constructively engage the process. He is committed to working toward a positive political evaluation of the Standards review.

But President Tadic cautions at the same time that this review must be accomplished in a comprehensive, fair and transparent way. It must accurately reflect the reality on the ground, which remains far from being even minimally adequate.

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Time is running short, but it has not run out. There is a danger that for reasons of expediency, the political evaluation of the Standards review will paint a false picture of progress. It is in no one’s interest that this be allowed to happen.

We must not reward failure because of the fear of more violence. The main argument in favor of moving the process forward despite the lack of readiness on the part of the PISG, is the fear of further violence, terrorism, and regional instability initiated by Kosovo’s Albanians—unfortunately the region’s leaders in organized crime, weapons and human trafficking. This cannot be acceptable to the United States and the rest of the international community. It cannot be acceptable to the members of this Committee, Mr. Chairman.

In order to move forward on the Standards process, a new impetus must be given to President Tadic’s five across-the-board decentralization process stipulations. UNMIK and the PISG must embrace them as a minimum requirement for multiethnicity to have a real chance to succeed.

Should UNMIK and the PISG move forward on President Tadic’s proposal, the pro-Western, democratic parties in Belgrade would respond with further positive signals of their own, opening the door to comprehensive dialogue and across-the-board constructive engagement, and empowering all the Kosovo and Metohija Serbs to do the same.

Only in this way can the legitimate security and IDP return concerns be adequately addressed. And only by adequately addressing them before the political Standards evaluation process is complete can the non-Albanian communities acquire the necessary confidence that the whole process has not already been pre-determined.

Mr. Chairman,

The time of Kosovo and Metohija’s destiny draws near. President Tadic and the rest of the democratic leadership in Belgrade is keenly aware of this. We are afraid that the pieces are being put in place for the international community to declare enough of a victory to move Kosovo and Metohija toward a future status for which it is clearly not prepared.

We are troubled by the fact that the Albanian leadership of Kosovo and Metohija is singularly dedicated to securing full and immediate independence, while Belgrade and the Contact Group emphasize the vital importance of a comprehensive implementation of the Standards. Only by fully and comprehensively implementing Standards can the lives of all the residents of Kosovo and Metohija improve.

And thanks to President Tadic’s leadership, Belgrade has adopted a constructive and cooperative stance toward resolving the Kosovo and Metohija challenge. At the same time, we are committed to defending our legitimate national interests. Significantly, these interests are driven by the very values the United States and the European Union consider to be foundational. Thus we share the same strategic goal.

In part this inability to swim in the main current of European values is the result of the Milosevic era’s repressive tactics against all the citizens of Serbia—tactics that brutally assaulted the civil

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rights of the Albanian community of Kosovo and Metohija as well. Milosevic chose not to attempt to reasonably and peacefully resolve the political conflict, while extremists within that community chose to take up arms against the regime. The Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) was formed and was financed by criminal enterprises that took root in cities like the Bronx and Brussels, Hamburg and Geneva, Rome and Chicago. The KLA engaged in terrorist activities whose cause the international community took up. The end result was a bombing campaign that resulted in the withdrawal of Serbian military, civilian, and administrative personnel from Kosovo and Metohija and the establishment of an international administration in the province.

And so President Tadic has made it clear that he does not envision the future status of Kosovo and Metohija in a pre-1999 way. It is not in Serbia’s interest to look back to the Milosevic legacy of brutally assaulting the civil rights of Serbia’s citizens—policies that tragically affected the Albanian community of Kosovo and Metohija most of all. At the same time, it seems to him that many in Pristina have failed to understand the significance of this strategic choice to fully embrace European values. Serbia today is a fundamentally different place than it was before the day we overthrew Milosevic on October 5th, 2000.

And President Tadic has made it equally clear that the status quo is also unacceptable. For the non-Albanian communities of Kosovo and Metohija, the period beginning from June 1999 to the present has been catastrophic: 228,741 Serbs and other non-Albanians ethnically cleansed, more than 3,000 murdered or missing, over 150 Orthodox churches and monasteries burned, looted or destroyed, and so on. The March 2004 pogrom took place during this period. Less than 5 percent of those expelled from Kosovo and Metohija since 1999 have returned. This figure speaks for itself.

Thus, for us, the UNMIK-PISG period largely has been a failure, despite some genuine and committed efforts by the international community, and by the United States in particular.

This position is shared not only by the Belgrade political establishment, but also by the United States and the rest of the Contact Group. The Contact Group has indicated to us that full and immediate independence and sovereignty for Kosovo and Metohija is not in the cards either.

But we are disappointed that the United States has not forcefully taken the lead in clearly repeating what Secretary of State Madeleine Albright stated in 1999: the result of the war will not be independence.

Mr. Chairman,

For President Tadic and the entire democratic political leadership of Serbia, the unconditional or conditional independence of Kosovo and Metohija is unacceptable. The reasons for this are numerous. I have already touched on some of them. I will enumerate 10 others, all of which mutually reinforce each other while standing on their own as well.

First, granting independence to Kosovo and Metohija would lead to generational instability for the metropolitan power of the Western Balkans. The only ones who would benefit politically

would be the extremists in my country—including the criminals-turned-politicians in Kosovo and Metohija. It would brutally destabilize the very order we have been trying to establish in the Western Balkans for more than a decade. Serbia’s sustained commitment to democracy would be likely dealt a fatal blow. Radical demagogues and ultranationalists would likely come to power, and Serbia would once more become the black hole of the Balkans, as it was during the Milosevic decade. This would set back the political, social and economic development of the region’s focal point. Granting independence would mean, in other words, allowing the minimal demands of a country of 10 million to be sacrificed for the maximalist demands of less than 2 million Albanians in Kosovo and Metohija. This cannot be in the strategic interest of the United States.

Second, granting independence to Kosovo and Metohija would likely produce more IDPs for Serbia. Most Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija—almost all south of the Ibar river—would not remain. The reason is simple: the Albanians of Kosovo and Metohija have done little to demonstrate through concrete deeds their firm commitment to meaningful multiethnicity. And this will not likely change fundamentally in the event of independence. What incentive would they have? This new wave of IDPs would not only pose a significant financial and social burden on Serbia—home to more refugees and IDPs than any other country in Europe—but would produce up to 150,000 radicalized voters and thus contribute to the generational instability of Serbia I discussed above. This cannot be in the strategic interest of the United States.

Third, granting independence to Kosovo and Metohija would almost surely destroy for good the strategic and moral goal of creating a multiethnic society. The process begun by the NATO intervention would result in the establishment of an ethnically pure state—the reverse of the intervention was supposed to achieve. The political and moral chasm created by such an outcome would severely hinder any future attempts by the United States, NATO or the European Union to intervene in other areas of ethnic conflict. It would, quite clearly, legitimize ethnic cleansing, and would severely undermine the European values the entire Western Balkans region is busily working to embrace. This cannot be in the strategic interest of the United States.

Fourth, granting independence to Kosovo and Metohija would put at great and immediate risk hundreds of medieval Christian holy sites, part of the Christian heritage of the West and of vital world cultural significance. Consider only the uproar created throughout Kosovo and Metohija Albanian society by UNMIK’s recent establishment of a special protection zone around the UNESCO World Heritage site of Visoki Decani, a Serbian Orthodox monastery. In this context, think back to the universal uproar that was heard across the world when the Taliban destroyed Buddhist statues in Barniyan only months before 9/11. The evidence on the ground—the destruction of 150 churches and monasteries since June 1999—strongly suggests a commitment on the part of extremists to try downgrade or even erase the centuries-old civilizational presence of the Serbian Orthodox Church. Endangering cultural heritage, or distorting its history, cannot be in the strategic interest of the United States.

Fifth, granting independence to Kosovo and Metohija would produce regional instability. This will affect the politics of the region for at least a generation as well, at potentially great human, material and political cost. Why would the Macedonian Albanians settle for anything short of independence? Why would the Bosnian Serbs, or the Bosnian Croats? Thus, the two most

significant peace-making achievements of the international community—the Ohrid Accords and the Dayton Accords—would likely come apart. This cannot be in the strategic interest of the United States.

Sixth, granting independence to Kosovo and Metohija would lead to the establishment of a hostile state bordering on Serbia. This would reignite tensions in south-central Serbia (Presevo, Bujanovac, Medvedja) and further threaten the territorial integrity of an already truncated Serbia. It would threaten the accessibility of the Corridor 10 transport system, a vital highway and rail network that links Turkey, Greece and Macedonia to the rest of Europe. This would financially affect the European Union. This cannot be in the strategic interest of the United States.

Seventh, granting independence to Kosovo and Metohija could increase the possibility of the establishment of an armed conflict in the Bosniak-majority Sandjak region of south-west Serbia and north-east Montenegro. Extremist Bosniaks would be hard-pressed to conclude that violence does not produce results that favor maximalist solutions to ethnic conflicts. Such a scenario would undermine the multiethnic way of life of both Serbia and Montenegro. This cannot be in the strategic interest of the United States.

Eight, granting independence to Kosovo and Metohija would likely produce global instability in areas of vital or significant interest to the United States. For example, why would the Kurds in southeastern Turkey, or in northern Iraq, not seek to renew their maximalist claims? What incentive would South Ossetia or Abkhazia have in remaining part of Georgia? Why would extremists within the Turkish Cypriots community (or, alternatively, the Greek Cypriot community) settle for anything short of an ethnically pure state? What reason would extremist Basques and Catalans in Spain have for seeking a compromise solution with Madrid? How could the international community ever hope of finding a compromise solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh-Azerbaijan conflict? Why would the leaders of Western Sahara choose to negotiate with Morocco? Why would some in Taiwan not fully embrace the path toward *de jure* independence from China? In short, granting independence to Kosovo and Metohija would create a dangerous precedent and could fundamentally revolutionize the international system. This could severely limit the effectiveness of the generational commitment the United States has made to waging war on terror. This cannot be in the strategic interest of the United States.

Ninth, granting independence to Kosovo would legitimize partition as an ethnic conflict management tool. Put plainly, granting independence to Kosovo and Metohija means partitioning Serbia, because the province is an integral part of Serbia, (as UN Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999) unequivocally reaffirms). Within an independent Kosovo, there would be no logical reason why its northern tip would not be justified in immediately seeking the right to secede from the rest. Granting independence would thus go against the Helsinki Final Act of 1975, the 1990 Charter of Paris, as well as the 1992 Badinter Commission’s binding conclusions. Most importantly, it would transform the UN Charter’s right to self-determination into a “right” to independence. This would destroy the Westphalian system’s core principle, reaffirmed countless times over the centuries, that favors the territorial integrity of states except in clearly defined exceptions, none of which Kosovo meets—as the entities the Bosnian Serbs and the Macedonian Albanians established did not meet either. This cannot be in the strategic interest of the United States.

Tenth, granting independence to Kosovo and Metohija would *de facto* create two Albanian states in Europe, a dangerous precedent unknown to post-Cold War Europe. However ironclad the guarantees may be that such a scenario would not take place, once the right to self-determination would be understood as the right to alter internationally recognized borders, what argument could be used against a Greater Albania project? (Or, for that matter, a revived Greater Croatia or a Greater Serbia or a Greater Hungary project?) To be precise, the Greater Albania project could affect the territorial integrity of an already truncated Serbia (Presevo, Bujanovac, Medvedja), Albania itself, Macedonia (the north-western third, including the capital, Skopje), Greece (its northernmost strip), and Montenegro (from Ulcinj all the way along the border with Albania and the administrative boundary with Kosovo and Metohija). This sort of destabilization cannot be in the strategic interest of the United States.

Mr. Chairman,

In short, granting independence to Kosovo and Metohija cannot be in the strategic interest of the United States for at least ten reasons. What then is President Tadic’s compromise solution to the challenge we all are facing?

President Tadic has termed his new deal for Kosovo and Metohija: “more than autonomy, less than independence.”

Therefore, in conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I will sketch its broad outline as already delivered by President Tadic to the Contact Group when it met in Belgrade on April 11th, 2005.

One of my colleagues has characterized the framework offered by this formula as “extended autonomy with international guarantees.” The framework offered by the formula “more than autonomy, less than independence” is one in which both sides can protect and advance their fundamental rights and interests. All this without risking any of the negative consequences a maximalist solution would almost certainly bring to Serbia, the region, Europe, and American strategic interests.

The framework offered by this formula would enable the Albanians of Kosovo and Metohija to decide on all matters concerning their everyday lives entirely on their own. Moreover, as the majority in Kosovo and Metohija, they would be entrusted with the province’s political power.

At the same time, the Serbs and other non-Albanians of Kosovo and Metohija would be protected by a broad, institutionally guaranteed decentralization framework. Additionally, the Serbian Orthodox cultural heritage of Kosovo and Metohija would remain under the protection of the international community. This entire structure would be formally established through an international agreement, which Serbia and the State Union would sign together with international guarantors.

Thus, the legitimate interests of both Albanians and Serbs would be well-served by the adoption of President Tadic’s vision for the future of Kosovo and Metohija. Additionally, all the residents

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of Kosovo and Metohija would have their human rights, their civil rights and their individual rights protected as never before. Maximalist claims would be rejected in favor of a solution that avoids the dangerous scenario of creating permanent winners and permanent losers.

And perhaps most importantly, we would intensify the pace at which we would walk down on our common road to Brussels. Extending the EU’s imaginative and workable “twin-track” approach to Kosovo and Metohija while remaining under one sovereign umbrella, one common roof, is an essential part of Serbian democracy’s deal for Kosovo and Metohija.

Such a “triple-track” mechanism would enable Kosovo and Metohija to piggy-back onto Serbia and Montenegro’s Stabilization and Association negotiations. At the same time, Pristina would set its own schedule in policy areas which they would conduct separately. These would include trade and economic policies, for example, as well as human rights.

Mr. Chairman,

Together, we believe we can advance our common aims, interests, and aspirations.

Together, we believe we can consolidate the tremendous changes that have swept throughout the Western Balkans in the past few years, and, as the President says, create a society in which children can be proud of their parents, and parents can be proud of their children.

Together, by keeping the borders the way they are, we can accelerate the clear and strait path toward total regional security and stability. A unified Western Balkans, moving strongly forward, together, toward European integration.

Together, we believe we can establish Serbia as a strategic anchor of Euro-Atlanticism. We can establish a new bastion of New Europe, increasing our ability to help fight the war on terror. From intelligence gathering to intelligence sharing, from training to military preparedness, Serbian democracy’s deal for Kosovo and Metohija will greatly enhance European cooperation in the global effort to meet this growing challenge.

Together, we believe we can create a new and vibrant regional generator of economic growth. We can provide increased economic security and opportunity for the region and beyond to foreign and domestic investors. We can make our lands strong and free.

And together, we believe we can build a principled peace with justice by doing the things that peace requires.

Together, by embracing Serbian democracy’s deal for Kosovo and Metohija, we can reconcile our interests with our values.

And we can show the world what we can do when we choose reason over passion, dialogue over destruction, reconciliation over revenge.

“Serbian Democracy’s Deal for Kosovo and Metohija”

Together, let us pray that the memories of all the horrors of war will be the force that drives our stellar commitment to overcome the challenges of peace that lie ahead.

Together, we can transform swords into plowshares.

Mr. Chairman,

President Tadic is convinced that as Serbia’s future draws nearer to membership in the European Union, Kosovo and Metohija’s political tension will diminish.

Our common future lies in Brussels. With some imagination, a little good will, and a strategic vision informed by creative thinking, we can transform the challenge that is Kosovo and Metohija into a paradigm solution to ethnic conflict.

Thank you Mr. Chairman for the opportunity to present Serbian democracy’s deal for Kosovo and Metohija.